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STATE FOR DRL/SEAS RICKMAN, EUR/OHI, EUR/AGS

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SUBJECT: Visit of Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat
Anti-Semitism Rickman to Vienna, July 5-8, 2006

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Summary

¶1. (SBU) Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism Gregg Rickman visited Vienna July 5-8 to pay introductory calls on Austrian and Jewish community representatives, as well as OSCE and EU officials. Rickman met with MFA Legal Adviser Ferdinand Trauttmansdorff; Secretary General of the National Fund for Victims of National Socialism, Hannah Lessing; Jewish Community President Ariel Muzicant; Johannan Edelman, spokesman of the NGO "Forum Against Anti-Semitism;" Director of the European Monitoring Center on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC), Beate Winkler; the Director of the Central Europe Center for Research and Documentation (CENTROPA), Edward Serotta; OSCE Secretary General Marc Perrin de Brichambault; and OSCE/ODIHR Advisor on Anti-Semitism Kathrin Meyer. Rickman discussed the issue of anti-Semitism in Europe and ways to combat it. End Summary.

MFA Legal Adviser Trauttmansdorff

¶2. (SBU) In the meeting with MFA Legal Adviser Ferdinand Trauttmansdorff, Special Envoy Rickman noted that anti-Nazi implementing legislation was quite strong in Austria and Germany. Trauttmansdorff agreed, saying this was due to the special responsibility Austria and Germany bore. Anti-Nazi restrictions are more far reaching than those for other hate speech. This became an issue in Austria when courts sentenced historian David Irving for denying the Holocaust, while the defense of free speech dominated discussion of the Mohammad cartoons. Trauttmansdorff said Austria had to underline that the special anti-Nazi legislation was a result of Austria's role during the Nazi era. The legislation remains active -- there are some 200 indictments each year, of which 30-40 receive sentences. Trauttmansdorff noted that Austria had found it necessary to reduce the minimum sentence for those whom courts found guilty under the legislation. Previously, it had proven difficult to win a conviction for relatively minor offenses, because courts were reluctant to impose the minimum five-year sentence in those cases. As a result, those cases fell through the

cracks. Trauttmansdorff noted that anti-Nazi political action was as important as anti-Nazi legislation, in order to address anti-Semitic attitudes. Special Envoy Rickman asked for a copy of the legislation, and Trauttmansdorff undertook to provide it.

National Fund Secretary General Lessing, IKG President Muzicant

13. (SBU) National Fund for Victims of National Socialism Secretary General Hannah Lessing and Jewish Community

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(IKG) President Ariel Musicant noted that key European problem countries in the area of anti-Semitism were France, Spain, Poland and Ukraine. They shared Rickman's concern over Arab/Islamic financed anti-Semitic agitation, and stressed the importance of education programs to combat anti-Semitism. Muzicant, who is also Vice-President of the European Jewish Congress (EJC), reported that the EJC was still considering whether to participate in the Babi Yar anniversary events in Ukraine in September. The EJC is concerned that the Ukrainian government may want to misuse the event for its own purposes, Muzicant said.

NGO "Forum Against Anti-Semitism"

14. (SBU) Johannan Edelman, spokesman of the "Forum Against Anti-Semitism," told Rickman that anti-Semitism in Austria most often manifested itself in the form of speech, not as physical violence. That said, each year, there were a few attacks that seemed to have anti-Semitism as a motive. More common were negative attitudes toward Jews. As an example, Edelman said many non-Jewish Austrians tended to resent Holocaust

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restitution efforts, even if they acknowledged that the Nazis had stolen the property in question. Edelman said Austrians still did not have the same acceptance of responsibility for the wrongs of the Nazi era that the Germans had.

Centropa

15. (SBU) Rickman visited the general headquarters of the Central European Center for Research and Documentation (Centropa), a Jewish history project offering a multi-media approach to learning about the lives of people in central and eastern Europe. Director Edward Serotta, an American who is the founder and creative force behind Centropa, described his goals as providing a positive message about Jewish history. For Jews, this is a view of their past. For non-Jews, it is a message about Jewish contributions to their common past, and about what they lost in the Holocaust. Serotta said that while his effort is not overtly about anti-Semitism, his entire strategic goal is to combat anti-Semitism by highlighting the participation of Jews in European history. Serotta's methodology involves thousands of personal interviews to capture memories of the past, and the collection of family photos and films. On this basis, he produces material for access via the internet (www.centropa.org) or on compact disc. These include "mini-documentaries," with a narration by the witnesses themselves over images and music. Serotta said he receives financial support from the Austrian government and from other governmental and non-governmental donors. However, the high cost of production necessitates a constant search for new funds.

European Monitoring Center on Racism and Xenophobia

¶16. (SBU) Beate Winkler, Director of the European Monitoring Center on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC), described the history of the EUMC's special report on "Manifestations of Anti-Semitism in the EU 2002-2003." Winkler regretted that it had not been possible to compile precise data on perpetrators of anti-Semitic acts. She also stressed the importance of harmonization of European legislation on anti-Semitism, and pointed in this context to the EU common framework decision calling for such harmonization.

Meeting with OSCE SG de Brichambaut

¶17. (U) In his meeting with OSCE Secretary General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut, Rickman noted that he had just come from Brussels where he had attended the OSCE's Parliamentary Assembly meeting. He expressed his desire to work with the OSCE in fighting anti-Semitism, but stressed that monitoring is the easy part -- combating it is the real challenge. De Brichambaut highlighted the considerable work the OSCE does in the field of tolerance and non-discrimination. He praised the U.S. for being at the forefront of combating anti-Semitism and reiterated the OSCE's commitment to fighting all forms of intolerance, including the rise of anti-Muslim and anti-Christian sentiment in various parts of the OSCE region.

¶18. (SBU) Rickman replied that he had no problem with the OSCE addressing anti-Islamic or anti-Christian behavior but stressed the importance of keeping the issue of anti-Semitism separate from all others. He noted with dismay the increase in anti-Semitism in eastern Europe, especially in Poland and Ukraine. He mentioned that he would like to see the production of a compendium of European laws on anti-Semitism, a tool that could be used to help plug holes in existing legislation. De Brichambaut proposed working this idea into one of the working sessions at next year's tolerance meeting in Bucharest. De Brichambaut said that perhaps the session could be devoted to a comparative reading of different laws and a discussion of best practices. Rickman responded positively to the idea and mentioned that he would like to see a focus on anti-incitement legislation at the Bucharest meeting.

Meeting with OSCE/ODIHR Adviser on Anti-Semitism

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¶19. (U) Rickman also met with the OSCE/ODIHR Adviser on Anti-Semitism, Kathrin Meyer. He mentioned that he would like to see the production of a compendium of European laws on anti-Semitism. He asked if ODIHR would be able to produce such a document. Kathrin Meyer informed him that such a compendium already exists. The Stephen Roth Institute of the University of Tel Aviv recently published a survey of anti-discrimination norms. Rickman said that the next step would be to analyze the legislation, to find best practices.

¶10. (U) Rickman asked Meyer what activities ODIHR was undertaking in the field of Holocaust Education. Meyer observed that in general there is a lack of trained teachers and training materials. Partially to counteract this, ODIHR has made its guidelines for preparing Holocaust Memorial Days available for download on its public website. Between 600 and 800 downloads are

registered every month. However, there are very few downloads made of the Russian language version of the guidelines. This shows that they are not reaching teachers in Russia and other parts of the former Soviet Union. This is probably due to the fact that most do not have Internet access. Therefore, if they want to reach Russian-speakers, they will need to distribute printed copies of the guidelines. Unfortunately, ODIHR does not have funds to do this.

¶11. (U) Rickman asked if a compilation of general educational guidelines exists. Meyer informed him that ODIHR is currently developing guidelines on anti-Semitism education, with support from the U.S. She has created teaching materials for seven European countries (Croatia, Denmark, Germany, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland and Ukraine). The materials were developed at a cost of \$15,000 per country, paid for by extra-budgetary contributions. They are divided into three parts, customized for each country: 1) historical anti-Semitism; 2) anti-Semitism today; and 3) anti-Semitism and other forms of discrimination. The professional-looking color guides are currently being tested in a small number of schools. Based on the results, final adjustments will be made to the materials. Depending on the availability of funds, they will be printed and distributed as widely as possible to schools in these countries.

¶12. (SBU) Meyer told Rickman that funding for anti-Semitism programs within the OSCE - and even within the Tolerance Section - is very precarious. Meyer's work is financed to a large extent through U.S. and German extra-budgetary contributions. Meyer herself is currently seconded by the German government. She needs additional funds to cover the printing and distribution of the Holocaust Memorial Days guidelines as well as the teaching materials on anti-Semitism. For the latter, funding for distribution in Ukraine is a top priority. She estimates that \$100,000 would cover the cost of providing teacher training materials as well as color brochures for students to take home in 100 schools. If funding eventually becomes available, she would like to expand this program to include Russia and Spain.

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